

Message Text

SECRET

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53

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /110 W

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R 271152Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8045

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 0906

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PBOR, SU, SO, OAU

SUBJ: NIMEIR COMMENTS ON ETHIOPIAN/SOMALI DISPUTE

REF: STATE 083787

1. DURING CONVERSATION APRIL 27, I ASKED PRESIDENT NIMEIRI WHETHER HE COULD COMMENT ON STATUS AND OUTLOOK ETHIOPIAN/SOMALI DISPUTE, PARTICULARLY WHETHER OAU GOOD OFFICES COMMISSION, OF WHICH HE A MEMBER, CURRENTLY ABLE PLAY SOME POSITIVE ROLE. NIMEIRI REPLIED THAT CURRENT SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA (HIS COMMENTS ON WHICH REPORTED SEPARATELY) MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR COMMISSION DO ANYTHING USEFUL FOR PRESENT EVEN THOUGH STATED POSITIONS TWO SIDES REMAINED IRRECONCILABLE. WHEREAS SOMALIS CLAIMED PROBLEM NOT A BORDER ISSUE BUT ONE INVOLVING AN ENTIRE "REGION", REPRESENTING SOME 30 PERCENT OF ETHIOPIA, HIM TOOK VIEW HE HAD INHERITED KINGDOM WITHIN EXISTING BOUNDARY, HAD RULED IT FOR 43 YEARS WITHOUT FRONTIER CHANGES IN THIS AREA AND BELIEVED BOUNDARY SHOULD STAY WHERE IT WAS. SOMALIS TOOK VIEW THAT NUMBER TRIBAL GROUPS WERE INVOLVED WHOSE AREAS LAY ATHWART ETHIOPIAN/SOMALI FRONTIER AND THAT HISTORIC AREAS OF SUCH TRIBES SHOULD BE INCORPORATED IN SOMALI. POOHPOOHING THIS ATTITUDE, NIMEIR REMARKED MOST COUNTRIES IN AFRICA, INCLUDING SUDAN, HAD PORTIONS TRIBES WHICH ALSO REPRESENTED

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SENTED OUTSIDE THEIR FRONTIERS. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT 1964

OAU DECISION HAD BEEN TO RECOGNIZE ALL AFRICAN COUNTRIES WITHIN EXISTING BOUNDARIES.

2. PRESIDENT OPINED SOMALI WOULD NOT SEEK TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CURRENT EGHIOPIAN DIFFICULTIES PRIOR TO SCHEDULED OAU SUMMIT MOGADISCIO IN JUNE. HE DID UNDERSTAND THAT SOMALIS WERE "STIRRING UP" SOME TRIBES IN BORDER AREA BUT DID NOT THINK THIS WOULD BECOME SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR PRESENT.

3. COMMENT. NIMEIRI'S REMARKS MAKE CLEAR OAU GOOD OFFICES COMMISSION REMAINS INACTIVE, THAT LITTLE EXPECTED OCCUR ON THIS PROBLEM PRIOR OAU SUMMIT BUT THAT SOMALIAN ACTION THERE- AFTER PROBABLY CANNOT BE EXCLUDED IN EVENT SITUATION ON GROUND APPEARS PROMISING AND SUMMIT MEETING PROVES UNHELPFUL FROM GOSR STANDPOINT.
BREWER

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NNN

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